

## 9,000 orange barrels and other I-15 Core project facts

Genelle Pugmire - Daily Herald | Posted: Monday, August 16, 2010 12:30 am |

Paul Atwood, courtesy driver for Provo River Constructors, cleans up debris from I-15 on Friday, June 11, 2010. As part of their customer service and to keep I-15 clear, UDOT and the I-15 Core project are providing courtesy cars that travel up and down the road looking for drivers in need. PATRICK SMITH/Daily Herald

Interstate 15 Core project workers are reminding drivers of new configurations at the Provo Center Street exit. Crews will re-stripe lanes to shift traffic onto new ramps and activate traffic signals that will be in place through 2012. Frequent drivers to the area should take extra precautions and become used to the new changes, said Scott Thompson, Core project spokesman.

To help ease people from right to left and keep them out of construction areas, there are the familiar bright orange barrels that seem to have grown like wildfire during the summer months. In fact, UDOT workers are often teased about orange being their favorite summer color.

In order to understand the scope of this 24-mile project, the largest in UDOT's history, Thompson has gathered some trivia about the I-15 Core Project -- starting with the orange barrels.

"We currently have 3,000 barrels involved with the project," Thompson said. "Six thousand more have been ordered and are on their way, just for the Core project."

Thompson admits that's a lot of orange, and drivers will quickly catch on that orange is the color of fall, winter and spring too.

UDOT also measures the scope of the project in lane miles, or the number of miles times the number of lanes. Core covers 435 lane miles.

"Remember, we're putting in two new lanes each way, six lanes on each side," Thompson said. "If you made it one lane, that is like from Provo to Phoenix or 463 miles."

Now for all those cross streets, remember there are 63 new, replaced or modified bridges in this project and 11 temporary bridges. Thompson said that equals 66 lane miles of cross-street improvements. There are 2 million cubic yards of roadway excavation or 400 football fields stacked three feet high of roadway.

Thompson said as for the bridges, "So far in design, six bridges in four locations will be done using Accelerated Bridge Construction, where they are built to the side of the location and moved into place. They include Sam White, Proctor, 200 South and Provo Center Street."

"The Sam White bridge move will involve the longest bridge to be moved in the intermountain west -- approximately 352 feet of bridge, or 65,000 linear feet of bridge beams," Thompson added.

In fact starting today, 300 West in Spanish Fork will be closed from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. to set girders for the new bridge there.

All of this takes lots and lots of concrete, pipe, retaining walls and all the stuff they're

made of. If you think you'll find all this at your local hardware store, think again. Here's the shopping list:

- 7.5 million tons of aggregate / granular material, about the same weight as 75 cruise ships
- 75,000 tons of fill, mostly reused concrete from the bridges that are removed and rebuilt
- 925,000 linear feet of underground piping, about 175 miles, or enough to reach the top of Mount Timpanogos 78 times
- 115,000 cubic yards of structural concrete
- 225,000 linear feet of pipe piling
- 1.75 million square feet of retaining and sound walls
- 2.8 million square yards of concrete paving, enough to fill 509 Lavell Edwards football fields
- 3.75 million square yards of asphalt paving, enough to make the entire Utah Valley University campus one big parking lot nearly three and a half times

This is all subject to change, of course.

"Knowing the size and scope and complexity of the project came as no surprise," Thompson said. "We knew it was going to be big."

Thinking big, if you think you've put on some summer poundage, how would you like to be the I-15 Core project? It will have an additional 96 million pounds of structural and reinforcing steel -- nearly the same as the average weight of the entire population of Utah County combined (averaging 180 pounds with the 2009 population of 545,307).

You also have to have people to move, pour, build, barrel and stake all these things. Thompson said there are nearly 1,000 men and women directly employed on the project with an anticipated 2,000 or more directly employed at the height of the construction. Employees have already logged more than 520,000 hours on the project since the start of construction.

Thompson reminds drivers to TravelWise by carpooling, telecommuting, using alternate routes and shifting travel times. More on how to TravelWise is online at [travelwise.utah.gov](http://travelwise.utah.gov). The project goal is to reduce by 20 percent the number of cars in the I-15 CORE area to keep construction delays at a minimum.

There's a graphic of the new Provo interchange configuration and signal locations online at [udot.utah.gov/i15core](http://udot.utah.gov/i15core). This is also where you can sign up for weekly e-mail updates on the project.

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